

Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis

(Updated December 2022)

Title of service or policy	Energy strategy – Renewal of Cooperation Agreement with Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE)
Name of directorate and service	Sustainable Communities Directorate Green Transformation service
Name and role of officers completing the EIA	Charlotte Campbell-Burt, Energy Strategy and Projects Manager
Date of assessment	27/07/2023

Equality Impact Assessment (or ‘Equality Analysis’) is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on different groups within the community. The main aim is to identify any discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and also to identify areas where equality can be better promoted. Equality impact Assessments (EIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so leave blank any that are not applicable.** It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council’s website.

1.1 Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented

Key questions	Answers / notes
<p>1.1 Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How the service/policy is delivered and by whom ● If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations ● Intended outcomes 	<p>Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council and BWCE have had a Cooperation Agreement since 2011 when BWCE were first set up. The intention of the Cooperation Agreement is to signal the joint collaborative working relationship we have with BWCE. It declares through a formal, public document that we have a shared vision and agree to co-operate to identify and bring forward projects and support each other wherever possible. The renewal of the Cooperation Agreement would mean that the Council and BWCE would agree to continue to work together to identify; energy projects within the district, opportunities for joint research about community-based projects, opportunities for people in the area to invest and potentially secure a return from projects and other funding opportunities.</p> <p>BWCE keeps the majority of the economic benefits in the area, through a local share-ownership model and importantly, the reinvestment of surplus revenues into the BWCE Community Fund. The fund has donated more than £330,000 to support projects reducing carbon emissions and combating fuel poverty.</p>

	The intention is that cooperation agreement will benefit all residents and provide community resilience across B&NES by leading to the generation of local energy for local people through community owned renewable energy projects and the delivery of low energy services. This will help alleviate the impact of rising fossil-fuelled energy prices, and retaining economic benefit locally.
1.2 Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one? ● Is it a national requirement?). ● How much room for review is there? 	The cooperation agreement is being renewed. The updates are minimal. The main changes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updating the document to strengthen our shared vision for: <i>'community resilience in B&NES by generating local energy for local people through community owned renewable energy projects and the delivery of low energy services. This will help alleviate the impact of rising fossil-fuelled energy prices, and retaining economic benefit locally'</i> - Updating references to new policies / strategies.
1.3 Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?	The Cooperation agreement itself does not directly link with other parts of the council. However any actions/outcomes as a result of the agreement, such as identifying and progressing with projects could link with other parts of the council including, Planning, Conservation, Green Infrastructure, Economic development. The Cooperation Agreement outcomes will link with future strategies such as the Energy strategy, Corporate Asset Management strategy, Economic strategy.

2. Consideration of available data, research and information

Key questions	Data, research and information that you can refer to
2.1 What equalities training have staff received to enable them to	Team managers are currently being recruited new staff will complete Equalities training as part of their induction process. They will receive training on equalities issues including on equalities

<p>understand the needs of our diverse community?</p>	<p>impact assessments. The Head of Service will also be undertaking the Council equality training course.</p>
<p>2.2 What is the equalities profile of service users?</p>	<p>The census data from 2021 can be found here: https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/initialfindingsfromthe2021censusinenglandandwales</p> <p>This outlines the population types across England and Wales.</p>
<p>2.3 Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?</p>	<p>Voicebox survey results show the level of interest our local residents have in renewables and retrofit. This provided a good distribution of views from a diverse range of groups.</p>
<p>2.4 What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?</p>	<p>Legal, Finance and Procurement have all been involved in the initial development and subsequent renewal of the Cooperation Agreement. Bath and West Community Energy have been consulted.</p> <p>Through the Centre of Sustainable Energy (CSE), small community groups in rural areas have been convened to talk about renewables in their area to gauge interest / understanding on renewables. The process is called future energy scenarios. Result of the workshops have been published here: https://www.cse.org.uk/my-community/community-projects/future-energy-landscapes-community-consultation-method/</p>
<p>2.5 If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equalities considerations within this?</p>	<p>Equality considerations will play a key part as more detailed plans setting out specific actions/outcomes as a result of the cooperation agreement.</p> <p>We (and BWCE) will continue to engage with members of the public, to ensure that local views are represented.</p>

3. Assessment of impact: ‘Equality analysis’

Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equalities groups

	Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
3.1 Issues relating to all groups and protected characteristics	<p>Positive impacts are expected for low income families as the BWCE fund helps support projects reducing carbon emissions and combating fuel poverty.</p> <p>Positive impacts are expected for all people including those with one or more protected characteristic.</p>	<p>We have not currently identified any actual or potential adverse impacts. However, we will continue to monitor projects that are contained within the action plan and undertake further Equality Assessments for specific projects when the need arises.</p>
<p>3.11 Socio-economically disadvantaged* – identify the impact on people who are disadvantaged due to factors like family background, educational attainment, neighbourhood, employment status can influence life chances (this is not a legal requirement, but is a local priority).</p>	<p>Where local need has been identified the cooperation agreement would enable us to support BWCE in identifying potential action specific to lower-income groups to promote socio-economic equality. However the strategy also aims to provide positive impacts to people from all socio-economic groups.</p>	<p>We have not currently identified any actual or potential adverse impacts. However, we will continue to monitor projects that are contained within the action plan and undertake further Equality Assessments for specific projects when the need arises.</p>

<p>3.12 Rural communities* identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities</p>	<p>If renewables projects are brought forward it is possible that rural areas may be selected as potential sites. This can be seen as a benefit to the communities into the local area. BWCE are experts in working with communities to get their buy in on projects.</p>	<p>We have not currently identified any actual or potential adverse impacts. However, we will continue to monitor projects that are contained within the action plan and undertake further Equality Assessments for specific projects when the need arises.</p>
<p>3.13 Armed Forces Community ** serving members; reservists; veterans and their families, including the bereaved. Public services are required by law to pay due regard to the Armed Forces Community when developing policy, procedures and making decisions, particularly in the areas of public housing, education and healthcare (to remove disadvantage and consider special provision).</p>	<p>Positive impacts are expected for all people regardless of whether they are part of the armed forces community.</p>	<p>We have not currently identified any actual or potential adverse impacts. However, we will continue to monitor projects that are contained within the action plan and undertake further Equality Assessments for specific projects when the need arises.</p>

*There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and have therefore been included here.

** The Equality Act does not cover armed forces community. However, the Armed Forces Bill (which came in on 22 Nov 2022) introduces a requirement to pay ‘due regard’ to make sure the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged when accessing public services.

4. Bath and North East Somerset Council & NHS B&NES Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones	Officer responsible	By when
Engagement between BWCE and local residents, groups, providers and organisations needs to be accessible, fair and representative.	Monitor attendance at future stakeholder forums to ensure appropriate representation of different groups and ensure it is as inclusive as possible.	TBC	Jackie Clayton and Louise Morris	TBC

5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be 'approved' by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equalities Team (equality@bathnes.gov.uk), who will publish it on the Council's and/or NHS B&NES' website. Keep a copy for your own records.

Signed off by: Sophie Broadfield

(Divisional Director or nominated senior officer)

Date:27/07/2023